

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 01907 281248Z

62

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INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1907

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CHANGES IN UN PROGRAM FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL
(UNPDAC) IN THAILAND

REFS: (A) BANGKOK 26963; (B) GENEVA 9542

SUMMARY. COL. CHAWALIT YOTMANI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE THAI CENTRAL NARCOTICS BUREAU, CALLED ON CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JANUARY 26 AND EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT INDICATIONS FROM GENEVA THAT UNPDAC IN THAILAND MAY BE CUT BACK. CHAWALIT SHOWED THE CHARGE A LETTER NOTING THAT THE UNPDAC BUDGET FOR 1976 WILL REMAIN AT THE 1975 LEVEL, THAT THE PRESENT PHASE OF THE PROJECT MAY BE SHORTENED FROM FIVE TO THREE YEARS, THAT NO NEW EXPENDITURES CAN BE MADE FOR EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS, AND THAT NO FUNDING AT ALL HAS BEEN APPROVED BEYOND JULY 1, 1976. CHAWALIT BELIEVES THE OVERALL FUND LEVEL IS ACCEPTABLE BUT THAT THE PROHIBITION ON EXPENDITURES FOR EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS WILL BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM WHICH WILL INHIBIT CONTINUATION OF THE PROJECT. HE IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE CURTAILMENT OF THE PROJECT.

IN EMBASSY VIEW UNPDAC HAS PERFORMED USEFUL ROLE
IN THAILAND IN IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL SUBSTITUTE CROPS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 01907 281248Z

FOR HILLTRIBES THAT TRADITIONALLY PRODUCE OPIUM. PRO-

GRAM SHOULD CONTINUE, WITH EMPHASIS SHIFTED TO APPLYING RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND WITH RTG BEGINNING TO ENFORCE BAN ON OPIUM PRODUCTION IN VILLAGES WHERE SUBSTITUTE CROPS ARE CULTIVATED.

ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S AND GENEVA'S VIEWS ON STATUS OF UNPDAC PROJECT AND US PLANS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNPDAC. END SUMMARY.

1. COL. CHAWALIT YOTMANI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE THAI CENTRAL NARCOTICS BOARD, CALLED ON CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JANUARY 26 TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE CHANGES IN UN PROGRAM FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL (UNPDAC) IN THAILAND.

2. CHAWALIT HAS LEARNED THAT MR. J.G. DE BEUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UN FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL (UNFDAC, PARENT OF UNPDAC), HAS BEEN CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF CUTTING BACK THE PROJECT IN THAILAND. DE BEUS' RATIONALE IS REPORTEDLY THAT THE PROJECT IN THAILAND HAS ACCOMPLISHED ITS OBJECTIVES IN THREE YEARS RATHER THAN IN THE FIVE YEARS ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED, IN THE SENSE THAT POTENTIAL SUBSTITUTE CROPS FOR OPIUM HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED, AND A DATA BASE HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED ON THE BEHAVIOR OF SUCH CROPS UNDER FIELD CONDITIONS IN THAILAND. (WE NOTE THAT PARA 2 OF REF B STATES THAT FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR FIVE YEARS OF ACTIVITY HAVE BEEN EXPENDED IN THREE YEARS.)

3. DE BEUS HAS ACCORDINGLY SUGGESTED THAT, PENDING A FINAL DECISION ON THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM IN THAILAND, EXPENDITURES SHOULD BE MADE IN 1976 AT THE SAME ANNUAL LEVEL AS IN 1975, I.E., NOT MORE THAN US\$700,000. AN ALLOTMENT HAS BEEN MADE FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 1976 OF US\$350,000, PROVIDED THAT EXPENDITURES SHOULD BE MADE FOR NECESSARY OPERATIONS ONLY, AND PLANNED EXPENDITURES FOR NEW EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS AND ADDITIONAL PROJECT ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE DEFERRED.

4. IN PROVIDING THIS TENTATIVE GUIDANCE TO THE PROJECT IN THAILAND, DE BEUS HAS ASSUMED THAT THERE WILL BE A CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 01907 281248Z

STEADILY INCREASING THAI GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT AND AN AVAILABILITY OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN THE FUND (WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT KNOW WHAT SUCH SOURCES MIGHT BE).

5. CHAWALIT EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE INDICATED PROHIBITION ON EXPENDITURES FOR EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS, NOTING THAT THIS MEANS THAT PRESENT MOMENTUM WILL BE LOST

WHILE THE FUTURE OF THE PROJECT IS ASSESSED. HE NOTED IN PARTICULAR THE LONG LEAD TIME FOR SOME ITEMS (ONE YEAR IN THE CASE OF VEHICLES SUCH AS LAND ROVERS) AND THE NEED TO CONSTRUCT SIMPLE SHELTERS FOR PROJECT PERSONNEL TO LIVE IN SATELLITE VILLAGES WHERE THE PROJECT IS IN OPERATION, RATHER THAN HERELY TO VISIT THESE AREAS FROM

TIME TO TIME. CHAWALIT BELIEVES THAT THE OVER ALL FUND

LIMITATION IS ACCEPTABLE, AS THIS IS THE PRESENT LEVEL OF ACTIVITY. PROHIBITION ON EXPENDITURES FOR EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM WHICH, HE BELIEVES, WILL TEND TO INHIBIT CONTINUATION OF PROJECT.

6. REF B PROVIDES ONLY INFO WE HAVE RECEIVED ON FUTURE STATUS OF UNPDAC PROJECT IN THAILAND.

7. COMMENT: AS WE READ LETTER (OFFICIAL-INFORMAL TYPE OF CORRESPONDENCE), IT APPEARS TO US THAT UNPDAC MAY BE CONSIDERING RE-ORIENTING RATHER THAN DISCONTINUING PROGRAM. LETTER SEEMS TO ADVOCATE GETTING PROJECT OUT OF TEST TUBE STAGE AND INTO LARGER SCALE IMPLEMENTATION. AT THAT POINT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR RTG TO ADD ELEMENT OF ENFORCEMENT, IMPLEMENTING 1959 BAN ON OPIUM CULTIVATION IN VILLAGES WHERE ALTERNATIVES TO OPIUM GROWING HAVE BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO BE PRECTICABLE. IN EMBASSY VIEW UNPDAC PROJECT HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN IDENTIFYING CROP SUBSTITUTES FOR OPIUM WHICH CAN BE GROWN AT THE ALTITUDES INVOLVED. IN OUR VIEW THE PROJECT SHOULD CONTINUE, THOUGH RE-ORIENTED IN A PHASED PROGRAM TO MOVE TOWARDS EXTENSION WORK ON CROPS ALREADY TESTED, ACCOMPANIED BY PROGRESSIVE ENDORCEMENT OF BAN ON OPIUM CULTIVATION. IF UNPDAC NO LONGER HAS FUNDS TO

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BANGKO 01907 281248Z

CONTINUE UNPDAC IN THAILAND, IN OUR VIEW IT SHOULD BE GIVEN MORE FUNDS SO THAT PROGRAM CAN BE CONTINUED AND RE-ORIENTED, AS NOTED ABOVE. DE BAUS ASSUMPTION, NOTED IN PARA 4 ABOVE, THAT THERE WILL HAVE TO BE A STEADILY INCREASING THAI GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT, WOULD LOGICALLY BE A PRE-CONDITION TO CONTINUATION OF THE PROJECT.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT USMISSION GENEVA INDICATE ANYTHING FURTHER ON STATUS OF UNFDAC CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE OF UNPDAC IN THAILAND AND PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECT IN LIGHT OF EVALUATION REPORT. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY VIEWS DEPT. OR 7.S. MISSION MAY HAVE ON EVALUATION REPORT AND STATUS OF U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO UNFDAC.

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